

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 IGA-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 OC-06

CCO-00 CIAE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02

PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00 EB-08 NSC-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 OES-06 COME-00 AGRE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

SP-02 /153 W

-----101748Z 109262 /46

O 101653Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2082

INFO USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 685

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MUNICH IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BUCHAREST 1732

FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF (OFDA)

GENEVA FOR UNDRO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, EAID, RO

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE: SITREP 6, MARCH 10

REF: BUCHAREST 1679

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU PLACED PRELIMINARY
DAMAGE ESTIMATE AT SIX BILLION LEI AND CURRENT DEATH
TOLL AT 1,387, BUT VOWED TO MAINTAIN ROMANIA'S
INTENSIVE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM. INDUSTRIAL
ESTABLISHMENTS ARE GRADUALLY RESUMING OPERATION,
AND STATE OF EMERGENCY WILL BE LIFTED MARCH 14.
CEAUSESCU LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON DESIRABILITY
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OF FOREIGN "ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE" SUCH AS LOW-
INTEREST LOANS, ADDING HE WOULD EVALUATE PRESIDENT
CARTER'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS AFTER
SEEING WHAT OFFERS U.S. WOULD MAKE TO MEET ROMANIA'S
POST-QUAKE NEEDS. END SUMMARY

2. CEAUSESCU PRESS CONFERENCE:

A. IN MARCH 10 MID-MORNING PRESS CONFERENCE FOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS (TRANSCRIPT NOT YET AVAILABLE), PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU PLACED INITIAL ESTIMATE OF ECONOMIC LOSSES FROM EARTHQUAKE AT SIX BILLION LEI (ROUGHLY DOLS 480 MILLION). DAMAGE IS SEVERAL TIMES THAT CAUSED BY 1970 AND 1975 FLOODS. FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE LOSSES SUFFERED BY PRIVATE CITIZENS TO THEIR OWN PROPERTY. REMOVAL OF MAJOR DEBRIS FROM STREETS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY TOMORROW, AND GOVERNMENT WILL IFT STATE OF EMERGENCY MARCH 14 FOR ALL AREAS EXCEPT POSSIBLY BUCHAREST. ALL BUT THREE OF FOUR MAJOR FACTORIES IN BUCHAREST ARE IN OPERATION.

B. PRESIDENT PLACED DEATH TOLL AT 1,387 IN BUCHAREST (INCLUDING EIGHT FOREIGNERS), BUT GAVE NO NATIONAL FIGURE: TOTAL IS EXPECTED TO RISE FURTHER. OF THESE, 1,204 HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. HE PLACED WOUNDED AT 10,500, OF WHOM 2,280 ARE STILL HOSPITALIZED. ONE HUNDRED MAJOR APARTMENT BUILDINGS IN BUCHAREST HAVE BEEN EVACUATED.

C. EARTHQUAKE WILL NOT CAUSE ANY CHANGE IN INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM OR GOR PLANS TO RAISE POPULACE'S STANDARD OF LIVING, PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED. IN FACT, EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO SURPASS ORIGINAL GOALS. ANNOUNCED START OF REDUCED WORK WEEK FROM 48 TO 44 HOURS FOR SOME INDUSTRIES WILL BE POSTPONED FOR ONE YEAR, HOWEVER. FIVE THOUSAND ADDITIONAL APARTMENTS BEYOND PLAN FIGURE WILL BE BUILT IN UNCLASSIFIED

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BUCHAREST THIS YEAR, AND TOWN OF ZIMNICEA WHICH WAS 80 PCT DESTROYED WILL BE COMPLETELY REBUILT. IN GENERAL, ALL BUILDINGS WILL BE REPLACED OR RECONSTRUCTED WITHIN TWO YEARS.

D. ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, CEAUSESCU STATED THAT BEYOND HUMANITARIAN AID WHICH HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY OFFERED BY MANY COUNTRIES, ONLY GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAVE OFFERED "ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE." ASKED ABOUT ASSISTANCE FROM SOVIET UNION, PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE HAD JUST LISTED ALL SUCH OFFERS. ON UNITED STATES, HE ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES BUT SAID THAT NO ECONOMIC AID HAD BEEN OFFERED. TO A QUESTION REGARDING U.S. ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CEAUSESCU SAID THIS PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD BE LIMITED TO EARTHQUAKE BUT THAT HE WOULD EVALUATE MR CARTER'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS AFTER SEEING WHAT OFFERS MR CARTER WOULD MAKE FOR ROMANIA'S NEEDS IN CONTEXT OF THIS CATASTROPHE. HE TWICE MENTIONED ROMANIAN

NEED FOR LOW-INTEREST LOANS FOR ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION, LOANS WHICH WOULD GRATEFULLY BE ACCEPTED FROM ANY COUNTRY "INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES." CEAUSESCU ALSO CALLED ON ROMANIA'S TRADING PARTNERS TO PROVIDE NECESSARY MACHINES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT EXPEDIOUSLY AND ON FAVORABLE FINANCIAL TERMS. ON AGRICULTURAL SIDE, EVEN THOUGH TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CATTLE WERE KILLED OR INJURED, PRESIDENT FORESAW NO MEAT SHORTAGE SINCE SIZE OF HERDS WAS LARGER THIS YEAR THAN LAST AND REMAINING BREEDING CATTLE WILL OFFSET THE LOSSES. ROMANIAN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN MAY WILL GO AHEAD AS PLANNED AS DEMONSTRATION OF COUNTRY'S INTERNAL STRENGTH AND INDEPENDENCE.

3. ECONOMIC LOSSES:

IN ADDITION TO INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PRESIDENT, POLEXCO SESSION MARCH 9 REPORTED THAT MORE THAN 20,000 UNCLASSIFIED

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HOUSING UNITS EITHER COLLAPSED OR WERE SEVERELY DAMAGED, AND 7,000 FAMILIES HAVE LOST THEIR HOMES. 195 INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES WERE DAMAGED, BUT MOST ARE NOW EXPECTED TO BE BACK IN AT LEAST PARTIAL PRODUCTION

SHORTLY. SCINTEIA LISTS A NUMBER OF INSTALLATIONS WHICH HAVE NOW RESUMED OPERATION. INVESTIGATIONS WILL BE LAUNCHED INTO CAUSES FOR COLLAPSE OF THE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF NEW BUILDINGS, AND DEFICIENCIES OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN (EG OVERLY HEAVY FACTORY ROOFS) WILL BE CORRECTED.

4. GOVERNMENT PROGRAM:

IN ADDITION TO BENEFITS REPORTED REFTTEL, POLEXCO ANNOUNCED THAT ALL WHO LOST THEIR PERSONAL BELONGINGS WILL ALSO RECEIVE A REFRIGERATOR AS A GIFT FROM THE STATE. CITIZENS ARE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE REPAIRS ON LESS DAMAGED HOMES BY MAY 1, WITH GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING TO ASSURE SUPPLIES OF NECESSARY CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. RESTORATION OF GAS FOR HEATING/COOKING TO AFFECTED AREAS OF BUCHAREST IS PROGRESSING GRADUALLY. BARNES

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